DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 369 819 TM 021 460

TITLE	Districtwide Norm-Referenced and Criterion-Referenced Tests Results, 1993: An Exploratory Data Analysis of the Relationship between Achievement and Absenteeism in New Orleans Public Schools.
INSTITUTION	New Orleans Public Schools, Louisiana. Dept. of Educational Accountability.
PUB DATE	Mar 94
NOTE	30p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research/Technical (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Academic Achievement; Achievement Tests; *Attendance; *Criterion Referenced Tests; Educational Improvement; Elementary Secondary Education; Enrollment; Low Achievement; Mathematics Tests; *Norm Referenced Tests; Profiles; Public Schools; Reading Tests; School Districts; *State Programs; Tables (Data); Testing Programs; *Test Results
IDENTIFIERS	California Achievement Tests; Exit Examinations; *New Orleans Public Schools LA

ABSTRACT

This report examines absenteeism and its relationship to performance on the California Achievement Tests (CAT) and the Graduation Exit Examinations (GEE) administered in the New Orleans (Louisiana) public schools in the spring of 1993. It also focuses on the need to report test data in a manner that more accurately reflects a district's achievement performance on standardized tests. Achievement profiles are presented that should be used to determine the success of district efforts for educational improvement. Achievement is more accurately reflected when test results are adjusted for student enrollment and absenteeism at the tested school. Evidence of district progress is best based on students enrolled all year who were not absent excessively. Median reading percentile scores on the CAT for students with less than 16 days absent were 4 to 7 points higher at every grade compared with scores not adjusted for absenteeism. Median reading and mathematics percentiles decreased as the number of days absent increased at all grade levels. A similar pattern was apparent for the GEE. The problem of absenteeism is especially critical at the secondary level, where any proposed solution must address the needs of high-risk students. Eight tables and five figures present study findings. (SLD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 369 819

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

CHARLES J. HATFIELD

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

1993 DISTRICTWIDE NORM-REFERENCED AND CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS RESULTS:

AN EXPLORATORY DATA ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACHIEVEMENT AND ABSENTEEISM IN NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ORLEANS PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD

Mrs. Gail Moore Glapion, Board President
Mrs. Cheryl Q. W. Cramer, Vice President
Ms. Maudelle Davis-Cade
Mr. Paul N. Sens
Dr. J. Berengher Brechtel
Mrs. Carolyn Green Ford
Ms. Leslie Jacobs

Dr. Morris L. Holmes, Superintendent
Dr. Linda Stelly, Associate Superintendent of Educational Programs

Prepared By:

The Department of Educational Accountability
Charles J. Hatfield, Director

March, 1994

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Executive Summary	1
A. Major Programmatic Implications of Report	1
B. Major Results of the Report	2
I. Introduction	4
II. Norm-Referenced Tests Results	5
III. Criterion-Referenced Tests Results	14
IV. Conclusions	17
Appendix	

TABLES

TABLE NO.	TITLE	PAGE
1	1993 Norm-Referenced Tests Results (CAT/E and CAT/5)	6
2	1993 CAT Reading Results as a Function of Enrollment and Absenteeism	8
3	1993 CAT Mathematics Results as a Function of Enrollment and Absenteeism	8
4	Disaggregation of 1993 Reading Performance on CAT as a Function of Absenteeism	9
5	Disaggregation of 1993 Mathematics Performance on CAT as a Function of Absenteeism	10
6	Percent Distribution of High and Low Risk Students in Reading as a Function of Absenteeism	11
7	Comparison of All Students Passing GEE to Those with Non-Excessive Absenteeism	15
8	Percent Attainment on Graduation Exit Examination as a Function of Absenteeism	16

FIGURES

FIGURE NO.	TITLE	PAGE
1	Median Reading Percentiles of 5th Grade Students as a Function of Number of Days Absent	12
2	Percent Distribution of High and Low Risk 5th Grade Students as a Function of Number of Days Absent	12
3	Disaggregation of Median Reading Percentiles of Fifth Grade Students as a Function of Risk and the Number of Days Absent	13
4	Disaggregation of Median Reading Percentiles of Fourth Grade Students as a Function of Risk and the Number of Days Absent	14
5	Percent of Tenth Grade Students Passing the Language Arts LEAP Examination as a Function of Number of Days Absent	17

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report examines absenteeism and its relationship to performance on the California Achievement Tests (CAT) and the Graduation Exit Examinations (GEE) that were administered in the spring of 1993. It also focuses on the need to report test data in a manner that more accurately reflects the District's achievement performance on standardized tests. Consequently, the achievement profiles presented in this report should be utilized by the District, Board and community with other baseline indicators to determine the success of its strategic planning efforts for educational improvement.

A. MAJOR PROGRAMMATIC IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

1. The District's achievement performance is more accurately reflected when test results are adjusted for student enrollment and absenteeism at the tested school. Specifically, it is proposed that evidence of districtwide progress on standardized achievement tests should only be based upon results from students who were enrolled at the tested school for the entire school year and were not absent excessively at that school.

2. Student absenteeism represents a major challenge for this District with respect to its negative impact on achievement. This problem is especially critical at the secondary level. Improvement will only occur through the concerted efforts of parents, District, city government and the community-at-large to develop, implement and monitor strategies that are designed to decrease absenteeism and to meet the instructional needs of these students while they are in school.

3. Any strategy designed to address decreasing absenteeism must also address the instructional needs and challenges of High Risk students who make up a disproportionate number of students who are absent excessively in this school district. They also represent the lowest performing group of students on achievement tests.

B. MAJOR RESULTS OF THE REPORT

1. California Achievement Tests (CAT)

a. Median reading percentile scores for students with non-excessive absenteeism (i.e., 16 days or less) were 4-7 points higher at every grade level when compared to the corresponding grade level percentile scores that were not adjusted for absenteeism. Similar results also occurred for mathematics at every grade level.

b. A relatively small percentage of students were excessively absent (i.e., equal to or greater than 17 days) at each grade level during the 1992-93 school year. With the exception of first grade, the median reading and mathematics percentiles of these students were near or below the 25th percentile. The performance of this group was also much poorer at every grade level than that of students with non-excessive absenteeism during the year.

c. Median reading and mathematics percentiles decreased as the number of days absent increased at all grade levels. However, the "at-risk" factor, as defined in previous reports, also has to be taken into consideration when interpreting these results. High Risk students represented a disproportionate number of students who were excessively absent during the 1992-93 school year. Median percentiles of these students in reading and mathematics were considerably lower than their Low risk counterparts at every grade and level of absenteeism analyzed.

2. Graduation Exit Examinations (GEE)

a. The percent attainment levels on the GEE for students who were not excessively absent were 5-10 points greater than those attainment levels reported for all students who took these tests. Students with non-excessive absenteeism represented 52% - 54% of the 10th and 11th grade students who took the test for the first time.

b. A relatively large percentage of 10th and 11th grade students were excessively absent during the 1992-93 school year. The percent attainment levels of these students were 10 - 22 percentage points lower than their counterparts who had not been excessively absent during the school year.

I. INTRODUCTION

Students in the New Orleans Public Schools are tested every spring with both norm-referenced and criterion-referenced tests. The California Achievement Tests (Forms E & F) have been administered since 1989 as part of the District's local, norm-referenced, assessment program. In 1993, Grades 1, 2, 3 and 5 were administered these tests. Since 1988, Grades 4 and 6 have been administered the alternate form of the locally administered CAT, Form F, as part of the norm-referenced segment of the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP). In 1993 these grade levels were administered the recently adopted CAT/5, Form B, as part of the norm-referenced segment of LEAP. In general, test results are reported by this department in terms of median national percentiles for Total Reading and Total Mathematics. The median is the midpoint at which 50% of the students score above and 50% of the students score below. Total Reading is a composite score of the Vocabulary and Comprehension subtest scores on both CAT tests while Total Mathematics is the composite of the Computation, and the Concepts and Applications subtest scores.

As part of the LEAP program in 1993, criterion-referenced tests were administered to Grades 3, 5, 7 and 10 in language arts and mathematics. Written composition was also administered at the 10th grade. Students in Grade 11 were administered science and social studies. The criterion-referenced tests administered at Grades 10 and 11 are also known as the Graduate Exit Examinations (GEE). Results from these tests are presented in terms of the percent of students attaining or passing established standards set by the State Department of Education in each of the subjects tested.

For the past two years, various test reports issued by the Department of Educational Accountability[1,2,3] have reported results based on the disaggregation of several districtwide

---

1 "Summary Report of the California Achievement Test Results: 1989-91" prepared by Department of Educational Accountability, New Orleans Public Schools, 1991- Internal Report

2 "Norm-Referenced Test Results of the New Orleans Public Schools: A Comprehensive Report on Their Relationship to Major Student Characteristics" prepared by the Department of Educational Accountability, New Orleans Public Schools, 1993-Internal Report

3 "Analysis of Major Outcome Indicators for Middle Grade Students in the New Orleans Public Schools", prepared by the Department of Educational Accountability, New Orleans Public Schools, 1993-Internal Report

variables, i.e, retention, Chapter 1 participation, free-lunch status, absenteeism, suspension, etc. The major observations presented in these earlier reports are confirmed and extended in this report. This report focuses on the need for the District to more precisely define the population of tested students for whom instructional progress is measured. Therefore, in addition to aggregating all test scores by grade level as has been traditionally done, test scores are also disaggregated with respect to enrollment and absenteeism at the tested school. This report provides an exploratory data analysis of the relationship between these variables and achievement.

It is important to emphasize that the results of the following secondary data analysis are based upon a major assumption that the majority of the enrollment and absenteeism information collected and processed from the schools by the Department of Computer Services is accurate. The extent to which this is not true will adversely impact any conclusions drawn in this report. The final verification of these results can only be determined by the extent to which they can be replicated at individual school sites.

II. NORM-REFERENCED TEST RESULTS

Table 1 presents the median national percentiles by grade level for the District in reading and mathematics. As can be observed, the median percentiles at the first grade level are at the 50th and 47th percentiles for reading and mathematics respectively. The median percentiles at and above the second grade level are below the 40th percentile. These results are similar to previously aggregated test results that have been obtained since 1989 on the CAT. In general, the median scores have fluctuated between the 40th and 50th percentiles for first grade and between the 30th and 40th percentiles for second grade and above (see Table A1 in the appendix).

TABLE 1

1993 NORM-REFERENCED TEST RESULTS
(CAT/E AND CAT/5)

GRADE LEVEL	NAME OF TEST	TESTING PROGRAM	MEDIAN NATIONAL READING PERCENTILE	MEDIAN NATIONAL MATHEMATICS PERCENTILE
1	CAT/E	LOCAL	50	47
2	CAT/E	LOCAL	34	39
3	CAT/E	LOCAL	34	39
4	CAT/5	STATE	37	37
5	CAT/E	LOCAL	31	39
6	CAT/5	STATE	25	34

The results presented in Table 1 do not clearly depict the District's accomplishments or its challenges for the future; nor do they give much insight into what strategies should be used to effect change. The remainder of this report focuses on the reading and mathematics results of a clearly targeted population of students with respect to school enrollment and absenteeism.[4] During the 1992-93 school year there were a total of 176 total instructional days. Results were disaggregated for students who had been enrolled for 176 days at the tested school and absent for either 16 days or less (non-excessive absenteeism) or 17 days or more (excessive absenteeism).[5] This targeted student population represented 79% - 87% of all students tested in 1993. The percentage of tested students who met the enrollment criterion of 176 days at each grade level is presented in Tables A2 and A3 for reading and mathematics respectively in the appendix.

---

[4] Enrollment and absenteeism information were obtained from the "end-of-year" student database.

[5] Moton and Lockett were excluded from this analysis since there were more than 176 instructional days because of the nature of the educational program.

The rationale for using 16 days as a cutoff for non-excessive absenteeism is based upon the School Board's policy on attendance that was adopted in 1973 (i.e, Policy No. 5113.1-R). Board policy states that elementary students must be in attendance for at least 160 days to be eligible to receive letter grades. At the secondary level, this policy states that students are to be in attendance for at least 80 days per semester in each class in order to be eligible to receive letter grades. In order to maintain consistency in analyzing data for both elementary and secondary students, it seems logical to use the 16 day figure to distinguish between non-excessive and excessive levels of absenteeism. It is also important to note that test data were not analyzed from students who were enrolled at the tested school for less than 176 days. Due to the present procedures for collecting and processing attendance data on the mainframe computer, it is difficult to determine total number of days absent during the school year at all previous schools attended for this group of students.

Tables 2 and 3 compare the reading and mathematics tests results respectively for all students and for those students who were not excessively absent. They also depict the percent of the tested student population represented by this subgroup. As can be seen, these students represent a sizable majority of the tested student population. **This non-excessive absenteeism group represents a population of students for whom generalizations should be made about the impact of instruction. It is this group for whom baseline measures of improved achievement should be developed.** It must be noted that the median reading percentiles are higher at every grade for this group by 4 - 7 percentile points than for all students tested. Similar results can be observed for mathematics. It is important to note that reporting scores in this manner for mathematics results in an increase in the median percentiles at all grade levels to above the 40th percentile.

TABLE 2

1993 CAT READING RESULTS
AS A FUNCTION OF ENROLLMENT AND ABSENTEEISM

GRADE	ALL STUDENTS	STUDENTS WITH NON-EXCESSIVE ABSENTEEISM	
	MEDIAN PERCENTILE	MEDIAN PERCENTILE	PERCENT OF ALL STUDENTS TESTED
1	50	55	66%
2	34	38	70%
3	34	39	71%
4	37	42	68%
5	31	35	72%
6	25	32	64%

TABLE 3

1993 CAT MATHEMATICS RESULTS
AS A FUNCTION OF ENROLLMENT AND ABSENTEEISM

GRADE	ALL STUDENTS	STUDENTS WITH NON-EXCESSIVE ABSENTEEISM	
	MEDIAN PERCENTILE	MEDIAN PERCENTILE	PERCENT OF ALL STUDENTS TESTED
1	47	53	67%
2	39	45	70%
3	39	46	71%
4	37	42	68%
5	39	44	72%
6	34	42	64%

Tables 4 and 5 present disaggregated results in reading and mathematics with respect to absenteeism of this targeted population, i.e., students enrolled at tested school for 176 days. The results depict a small percentage of students who are excessively absent at each grade level, i.e., 15-19% of the targeted population, and whose average performance is near or below the 25th percentile with the exception of the first grade. Further disaggregation of the composition of these two groups with respect to "at-risk" indicators reveals a very important result that is depicted in Table 6. Students who are excessively absent are disproportionately represented by High Risk students. The ratio of High Risk to Low Risk students in the excessive absenteeism group is approximately 3 to 1 at every grade level.[6] This is to be contrasted to the percent distribution of High and Low Risk students in the non-excessive absenteeism category where High Risk students constitute a small majority at most of the grade levels.

TABLE 4

DISAGGREGATION OF 1993 READING PERFORMANCE
ON CAT AS A FUNCTION OF ABSENTEEISM

GRADE	MEDIAN NATIONAL PERCENTILES IN READING	
	STUDENTS WITH NON-EXCESSIVE ABSENTEEISM	STUDENTS WITH EXCESSIVE ABSENTEEISM
1	55 (N=4766)	31 (N=1104)
2	38 (N=4720)	23 (N=859)
3	39 (N=4497)	25 (N=859)
4	42 (N=3922)	25 (N=687)
5	35 (N=4219)	24 (N=853)
6	32 (N=3493)	17 (N=818)

[6] The terms High and Low Risk have been previously used by the Department of Educational Accountability in its annual testing reports as a basis for disaggregating test results of the New Orleans Public Schools. High and Low Risk are operational definitions used to categorize students with respect to retention and Chapter 1 participation: Low Risk– students who have never been retained and have never received Chapter 1 services. High Risk– students who have been retained or have received Chapter 1 services for at least one school year.

TABLE 5

DISAGGREGATION OF 1993 MATHEMATICS PERFORMANCE ON CAT AS A FUNCTION OF ABSENTEEISM

GRADE	MEDIAN NATIONAL PERCENTILES IN MATHEMATICS	
	STUDENTS WITH NON-EXCESSIVE ABSENTEEISM	STUDENTS WITH EXCESSIVE ABSENTEEISM
1	53 (N=4785)	34 (N=1101)
2	45 (N=4710)	22 (N=861)
3	46 (N=4496)	26 (N=857)
4	42 (N=3917)	24 (N=683)
5	44 (N=4210)	27 (N=850)
6	42 (N=3486)	20 (N=823)

Finally, the previous disaggregation of absenteeism represents a profile of two extreme levels of absenteeism with vastly different numbers of students in each group. In order to gain a better understanding of the impact of different levels of absenteeism within the non-excessive absenteeism group, students were subdivided into four categories of days absent. Figure 1 presents the median percentiles in reading for each of these absenteeism categories for the 5th grade. The achievement test scores decrease as the number of days absent increases. Similar information for all grade levels appears in Table A4 of the appendix. Figure 2 is presented to show that as the levels of absenteeism increase, the percentage of High Risk students in each category increases. Similar information for all grade levels is presented in Table A5 of the appendix.

TABLE 6

PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF
HIGH AND LOW RISK STUDENTS
IN READING AS A FUNCTION OF ABSENTEEISM

GRADE	RISK CATEGORY	NON-EXCESSIVE ABSENTEEISM	EXCESSIVE ABSENTEEISM
1	Low	53%	33%
	High	47%	67%
2	Low	50%	25%
	High	50%	75%
3	Low	41%	24%
	High	59%	76%
4	Low	43%	25%
	High	57%	75%
5	Low	43%	21%
	High	57%	79%
6	Low	49%	26%
	High	51%	74%

FIGURE 1

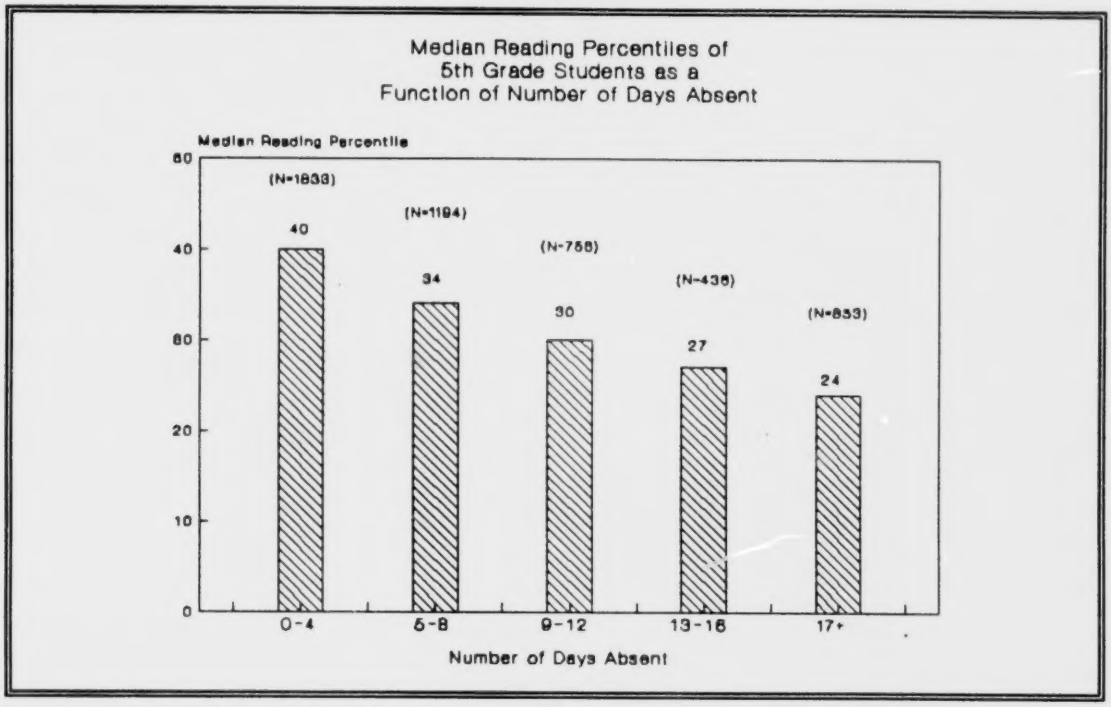


FIGURE 2

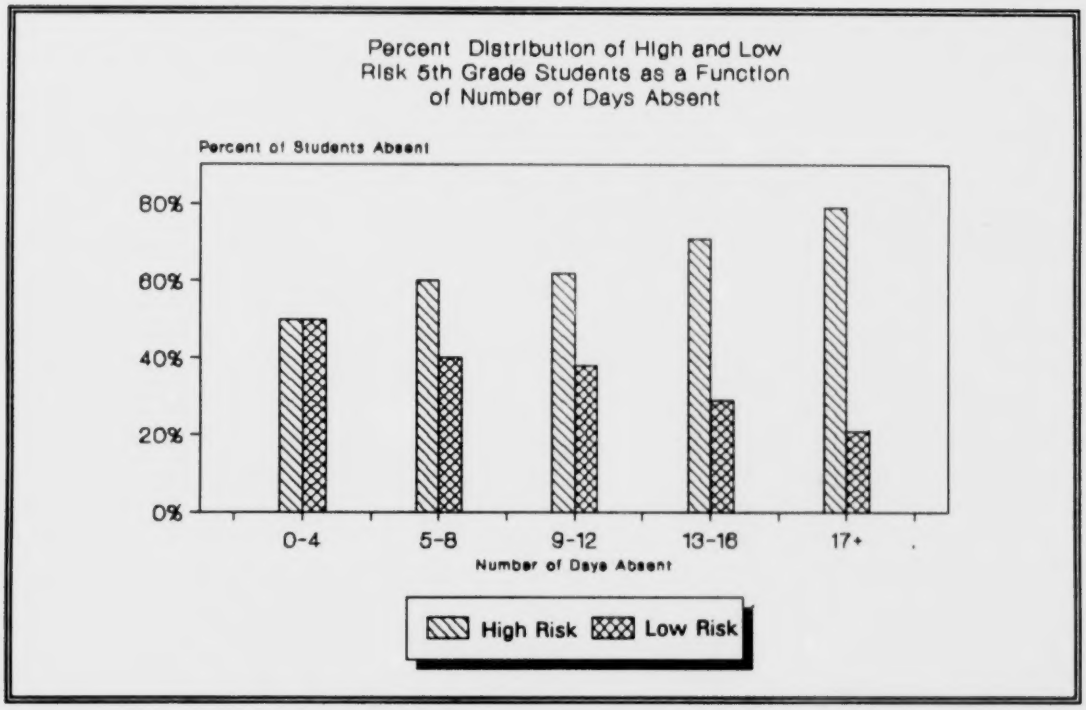


Figure 3 graphically depicts the decline of test scores as a function of days absent for High and Low Risk 5th graders. The average performance of both groups is presented for comparison as a function of the number of days absent. Although the level of performance for the Low Risk group remains considerably superior to that of the High Risk group, the achievement levels of both groups declines as the number of days absent increases. **The decrease in achievement test scores, as observed in Figure 1, is associated not only with the increase in the number of days absent but also with the increase in the percentage of High Risk students in each of the absenteeism categories.** Since the percentage of these students increases as the number of absent days increases, their impact on the overall median scores for the 5th grade also increases. Figure 4 presents similar results for the 4th grade in reading on the new CAT/5 administered by the state. Similar information appears for all grade levels in Table A6 of the appendix.

FIGURE 3

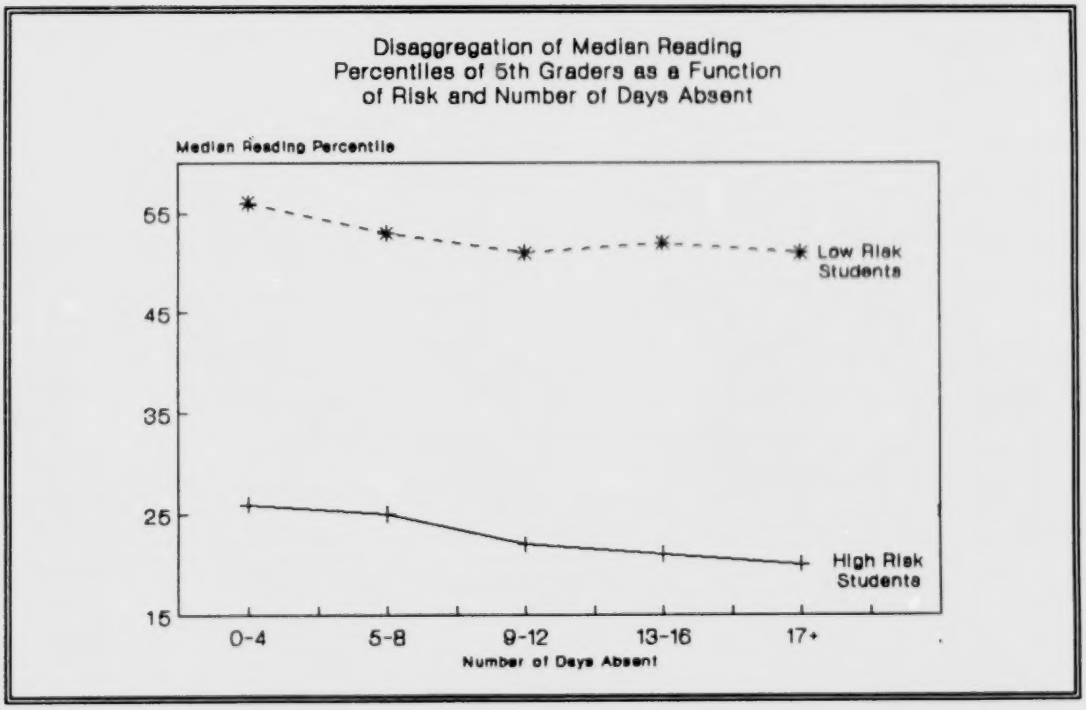
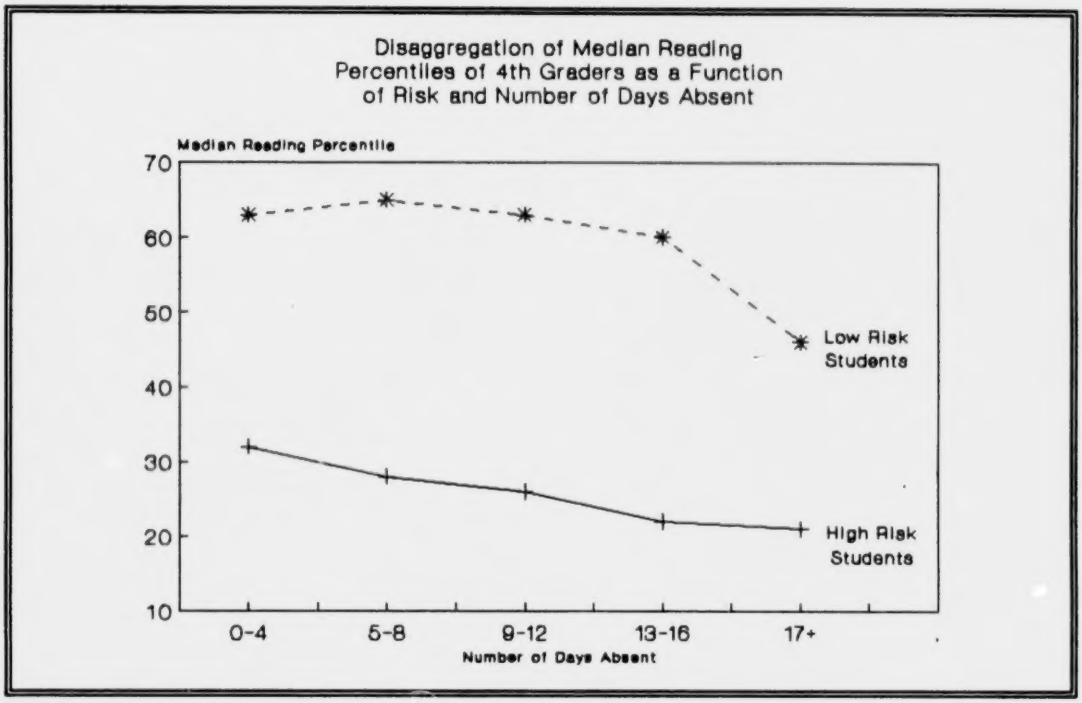


FIGURE 4



III. CRITERION-TEST RESULTS

Similar achievement patterns are observed when the LEAP criterion-referenced tests (CRT) results are also disaggregated with respect to absenteeism. Unfortunately, the scope of this analysis is more limited than in the previous section. Local ID numbers are only available on the criterion-referenced tests for 10th and 11th graders. These ID numbers are needed to obtain enrollment and absenteeism information on students from the District's student database. Additionally, it is not possible to measure "at-risk" as operationally defined in this and other previous reports produced by the department. The longitudinal database used for this analysis does not have all of the historical information on retention and Chapter I participation that is needed to categorize 10th and 11th grade students as either High or Low Risk. Consequently, the results are presented only for 10th and 11th grade students who were enrolled for 176 days. This targeted group represents 87% - 90% of all the students who took the GEE for the first

for the first time. A percentage breakdown for each grade appears in Table A7 of the appendix.

Table 7 compares the results of the 1993 Graduation Exit Examinations for all students to those with non-excessive absenteeism. Two observations are immediately apparent: the percent attainment of students who were not absent excessively is 5-10 percentage points higher than for all tested students; and the percent of 10th and 11th grade students who were not absent excessively varies between 52-54% of the targeted population. These percentages are less than the 64-72% reported for the elementary students in Tables 2 and 3. Table 8 compares non-excessive and excessive absenteeism with respect to the percent attainment for each tested subject. As with the norm-referenced test results, one can observe the negative association between excessive absenteeism and achievement. Students who were excessively absent performed worst than students who were not excessively absent by 10 - 22 percentage points.

TABLE 7

COMPARISON OF ALL STUDENTS PASSING GEE TO THOSE WITH NON-EXCESSIVE ABSENTEEISM

SUBJECTS TESTED	ALL STUDENTS*	STUDENTS WITH NON-EXCESSIVE ABSENTEEISM*	
	PERCENT PASSING	PERCENT PASSING	PERCENT OF ALL STUDENTS TESTED
LANGUAGE ARTS	76%	83%	53%
MATHEMATICS	62%	72%	53%
WRITTEN COMP.	83%	88%	54%
SCIENCE	73%	80%	52%
SOCIAL STUDIES	79%	85%	52%

* Number of first time test takers at 10th and 11th grade

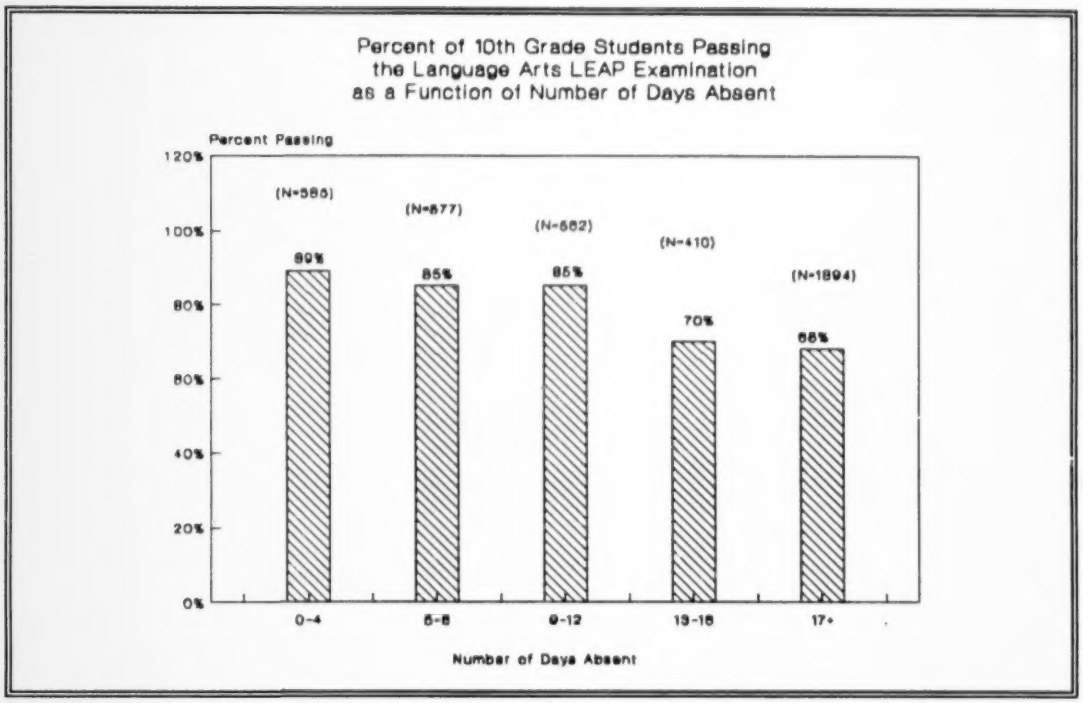
TABLE 8

PERCENT ATTAINMENT ON
GRADUATION EXIT EXAMINATION
AS A FUNCTION OF ABSENTEEISM

SUBJECTS TESTED	STUDENTS WITH NON-EXCESSIVE ABSENTEEISM	STUDENTS WITH EXCESSIVE ABSENTEEISM
LANGUAGE ARTS	83% (N=2134)	68% (N=1394)
MATHEMATICS	72% (N=2131)	50% (N=1386)
WRITTEN COMP.	88% (N=2115)	78% (N=1328)
SCIENCE	80% (N=1790)	65% (N=1318)
SOCIAL STUDIES	85% (N=1793)	73% (N=1321)

The non-excessive absenteeism group was also subdivided into four absenteeism categories in order to gain a better understanding of the relationship of achievement to different levels of absenteeism within this group. Figure 5 presents the percentage of 10th grade students passing language arts in each absenteeism category. As can be seen, the pattern observed with the norm-referenced test results is repeated here using a different measure of performance. The percentage of students passing each subject decreases as the number of days absent increases. Similar information is presented for all subjects in Table A5 of the appendix.

FIGURE 5



IV. CONCLUSIONS

It is difficult to establish an accurate and reliable baseline of performance for any districtwide, instructional effort without attempting to minimally control for enrollment and absenteeism when reporting achievement test data. Accordingly, parameters were established for reporting more accurate and reliable baseline achievement levels of performance. Utilizing these reporting parameters in future reports is critical given the strategic planning efforts of the District.

The disaggregation of the 1993 districtwide, test results clearly demonstrated the extent and consistency to which absenteeism, especially excessive absenteeism, is associated with poor achievement in this district. The disaggregated results showed a very consistent achievement profile across all grade levels and for different types of achievement tests using different performance measures. Students who were excessively absent performed more poorly as a

group on both norm-referenced and criterion-referenced tests than those students who were not absent excessively. However, the results also demonstrated that absenteeism was also associated with "at-risk" behavior as defined in the report. High Risk students were disproportionately represented in the excessive absenteeism group at all grade levels tested. Any strategy designed to impact absenteeism and increase achievement must minimally address the instructional, social and psychological needs of High Risk students. Such strategies must involve not just the District or school sites but also parents, city government and the community at-large working in concert to increase student attendance and to improve achievement.

These results support and expand upon the results from the analyses of last year's CAT scores which showed that Low Risk students were absent on the average less frequently than High Risk students at every grade level.[7] Preliminary evidence was also presented that suggested High Risk students were absent excessively almost twice as much as the Low Risk students. The consistency of these results across time continue to challenge this District to develop strategies to decrease absenteeism and to eliminate the relationship between risk and achievement.

It must be emphasized that the separation of students into different risk groups does not suggest that there are different expectations for these students, nor does it preclude the use of other factors that are also important in identifying at-risk students. It is expected that these terms, and the subsequent refinement of these terms, will add to the arsenal of predictors of school success and identify students for whom special programs are needed. These results should highlight the need for this District to move away from its "obsession" with test scores to a determination to focus more on those precursor conditions which annually result in the majority of our students performing poorly on standardized tests.

With respect to the Graduation Exit Examinations, results showed similar achievement profiles as those obtained for the norm-referenced tests. One major difference was the relatively

---

[7] "Norm-Referenced Test Results of the New Orleans Public Schools: A Comprehensive Report on Their Relationship to Major Student Characteristics" prepared by the Department of Educational Accountability, New Orleans Public Schools, 1993-Internal Report

large percentage of targeted students who were excessively absent, i.e., approximately 40%. Excessive absenteeism has traditionally been a problem at the secondary level. However, the relatively poor performance of this group on the Graduation Exit Examinations is cause for serious concern considering the "high stakes" nature of these tests. It behooves not only the District but parents and community to make student attendance a number one priority at the secondary level in any strategic planning effort.

Clearly, student absenteeism does not account for all of the factors influencing poor achievement. Variables such as content of instruction, equity in instruction, quality of instructional delivery, teacher absenteeism, tardiness, homework completion, school climate, self esteem, etc., must be factored into any equation that attempts to explain achievement or lack of achievement in this system. Unfortunately, not all of these variables lend themselves readily to districtwide analysis at this time. They are more readily available for analyses at the individual school sites. Given the current districtwide limitations, it behooves individual school sites to begin to factor these and other variables into their analyses of test scores and to use the results as a basis for any instructional planning efforts.

Finally, one last concern involves the present status of the student database system in the District. Ideally, a mainframe, student database, management information system should be developed which contains current and archival student information that is linked to other files or other databases in the system, such as the personnel, budget, current and archival testing files, etc. At the present time, this system does not exist except for a subset of the archival student data and testing data files managed by Educational Accountability and the data management and statistical software it uses to access and analyze information from them. It is strongly recommended that the District develop such a management information system that is driven by state-of-the-art database software. In addition, it is strongly recommended that the District develop a process to insure accuracy of student information collected. In the meantime, specific data files should be created by the system which would permit data in other files to be linked to each other in order to address major questions on student academic performance.

APPENDIX

TABLE A1

COMPARISON OF 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992 AND 1993
MEDIAN NATIONAL PERCENTILES FOR THE DISTRICT
ON THE CALIFORNIA ACHIEVEMENT TEST
(FORMS E, F & 5)
(REGULAR STUDENTS)

	READING					MATHEMATICS				
GRADE	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
1	48	49	46	44	50	49	48	47	44	47
2	32	33	32	32	34	40	40	42	37	39
3	36	34	34	34	34	46	37	39	39	39
4*	34	36	35	34	*37*	36	39	39	36	*37*
5	30	27	31	30	31	39	37	42	39	39
6*	32	34	32	35	*25*	40	39	38	40	*34*

*NOTE: Grades 4 & 6 were tested with CAT/F from 1989-92, and with CAT/5 in 1993; results are not directly comparable

TABLE A2

PERCENT OF STUDENTS TESTED
IN READING WHO WERE ENROLLED AT
TESTED SCHOOL FOR 176 DAYS

GRADE	NUMBER OF ALL STUDENTS TESTED IN READING	PERCENT ENROLLED FOR 176 DAYS
1	7164	82%
2	6715	83%
3	6349	84%
4	5755	80%
5	5859	87%
6	5460	79%

TABLE A3

PERCENT OF STUDENTS TESTED
IN MATHEMATICS WHO WERE ENROLLED
AT TESTED SCHOOL FOR 176 DAYS

	NUMBER OF ALL STUDENTS TESTED IN MATH	PERCENT ENROLLED FOR 176 DAYS
1	7164	81%
2	6700	85%
3	6338	84%
4	5748	84%
5	5838	87%
6	5450	79%

TABLE A4

MEDIAN PERCENTILES IN READING
AS A FUNCTION OF DAYS ABSENT

GRADE	NUMBER OF DAYS ABSENT				
	0-4	5-8	9-12	13-16	17+
1	60 (N=1863)	55 (N=1364)	52 (N=952)	43 (N=587)	31 (N=1104)
2	41 (N=1932)	37 (N=1315)	36 (N=898)	32 (N=543)	23 (N=859)
3	42 (N=1993)	38 (N=1203)	33 (N=793)	34 (N=508)	25 (N=859)
4	48 (N=1833)	39 (N=1089)	38 (N=684)	32 (N=401)	25 (N=687)
5	40 (N=1833)	34 (N=1194)	30 (N=756)	27 (N=436)	24 (N=853)
6	38 (N=1544)	30 (N=963)	30 (N=583)	22 (N=393)	17 (N=818)

TABLE A5

PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF HIGH RISK STUDENTS
AS A FUNCTION OF DAYS ABSENT

GRADE	NUMBER OF DAYS ABSENT				
	0-4	5-8	9-12	13-16	17+
1	41%	47%	52%	57%	67%
2	44%	49%	56%	62%	75%
3	51%	61%	69%	70%	76%
4	50%	61%	61%	68%	75%
5	50%	60%	62%	71%	79%
6	45%	51%	55%	66%	74%

TABLE A6

MEDIAN SCORES OF HIGH AND LOW RISK STUDENTS
AS A FUNCTION OF DAYS ABSENT

GRADE LEVEL	RISK LEVEL	DAYS ABSENT				
		0-4	5-8	9-12	13-16	17+
1	Low	59	65	63	57	47
	High	41	39	38	25	19
2	Low	65	65	63	57	47
	High	29	25	25	22	18
3	Low	59	63	54	60	55
	High	29	27	26	25	19
4	Low	63	65	63	60	46
	High	32	28	26	22	21
5	Low	56	53	51	52	51
	High	26	25	22	21	20
6	Low	54	49	53	41	40
	High	22	20	18	16	12

TABLE A7

PERCENT OF STUDENTS TESTED ON GEE
WHO WERE ENROLLED FOR 176 DAYS

SUBJECT	NUMBER OF ALL STUDENTS TESTED*	PERCENT OF STUDENTS ENROLLED FOR 176 DAYS
LANGUAGE ARTS	4059	87%
MATHEMATICS	4052	87%
WRITTEN COMP.	3935	87%
SCIENCE	3434	90%
SOCIAL STUDIES	3448	90%

* Number of first time test takers at 10th and 11th grade

TABLE A8

PERCENT OF STUDENTS PASSING
AS A FUNCTION OF DAYS ABSENT

SUBJECT	PERCENT PASSING				
	0-4	5-8	9-12	13-16	17+
Language Arts	89% (585)	85% (577)	85% (562)	70% (410)	68% (1394)
Mathematics	82% (585)	76% (575)	69% (560)	58% (411)	50% (1386)
Written Comp.	89% (584)	90% (568)	89% (557)	80% (406)	78% (1328)
Science	86% (416)	82% (508)	79% (485)	73% (381)	65% (1318)
Social Studies	90% (415)	88% (509)	83% (486)	79% (383)	73% (1321)